

CC 96-45

**SouthWest Montana
Telepsychiatry Network**

St. Peter's Hospital • 2475 Broadway • Helena, MT 59601

(406) 447-2800 • Fax (406) 444-2151

April 29, 1997

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MAY 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of General Counsel

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC20554

Dear Commissioner Chong:

I am sorry you were unable to be part of the conference call yesterday and I sincerely appreciate the attention, interest and knowledge which Dan displayed during that call. This letter simply re-states some of what I said at that time.

SouthWest Montana Telepsychiatry Network began operation in January, 1995, to improve access and quality of mental health services in a twelve county area of Montana that is 28,509 square miles with a population of 190,000. Our network provides psychiatric services to people in that area who previously either depended upon a family practice physician for medication management or had no psychiatric services at all until their illness required hospitalization.

We have been working with Anaconda (population 10,000) for almost one year to develop a videoconferencing site in their community. Anaconda is headquarters for AWARE, Inc., an agency that manages fifteen group homes for emotionally disturbed adolescents. These group homes are scattered over the entire state and many have no access to a psychiatrist. AWARE is viewing Telepsychiatry as a method of maintaining continuity of care for these youth. Additionally, there are people within the community who are often required to travel 240 miles one-way to Billings for specialty medical care. Videoconferencing capability would allow follow-up visits to their specialists without lengthy travel.

Cost for videocommunication access to Anaconda is quoted at \$1,181.50 - \$5,610 for installation, plus an additional charge of \$1,125.60 - \$1,680 per month. Transmission cost is not included in the price quote. The exorbitant price is a direct result of the mileage rate imposed to backhaul the T-1 access line to Butte. This cost makes telehealth access to Anaconda unaffordable. I urge you to prohibit the use of distance as a factor in determining transmission rates for healthcare. Access to quality medical care for many people in rural Montana will continue to be limited, difficult, and sometimes impossible unless telehealth can become an affordable choice.

Sincerely,



Nancy A. Cobble, RN, MA
Director - SouthWest Montana Telepsychiatry Network

cc: Dan Gonzales, Staff ✓

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

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**U.S. House of Representatives
 Committee on Commerce**

Washington, DC 20515-6115

JAMES E. GERDERIAN, CHIEF OF STAFF

DEMOCRATIC STAFF

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE:

4/29/97

TO:

Commissioner Chong

FROM:

FAX NUMBER:

418-2820

NUMBER OF PAGES:
 (Including Cover)

6

COMMENTS:

(If there are problems with this transmission,
 please phone 202-226-3400, Democratic Staff, 564 FHOB.)

CC 96-45

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**U.S. House of Representatives
 Committee on Commerce**

Room 2125, Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515-6115

April 29, 1997

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MAY 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
 Office of Consumer Affairs

The Honorable Reed Hundt
 Chairman
 Federal Communications Commission
 1919 M Street, N.W.
 Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I understand the Commission intends to issue access reform and universal service rules concurrently on or before May 8, 1997. Based on recent reports from your staff and in the press, I am deeply concerned that the Commission's current plans for access reform will lead to dramatic rate increases for local telephone service subscribers. Any local telephone rate increases resulting from Commission actions to raise the Subscriber Line Charge and modify access charges in a way that puts universal service subsidies at risk would be sharply at odds with Congressional intent in its passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

As you know, no statutory mandate exists to complete the Commission's access reform proceeding concurrent with implementation of the universal service provisions contained in Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the "Act"). Therefore, I strongly urge the Commission to refrain from issuing a Final Report and Order on access reform at this time, and instead issue a Further Notice to determine more precisely the impact of these proposed rules on local telephone rates.

It is indisputable that access charges and universal service are closely linked due to the existence of implicit subsidies in access charges that currently support universal service. Therefore, I believe it would be highly imprudent to issue final rules for access reform *unless and until* the following conditions are met:

1. the implicit subsidies contained in access charges that support universal service are identified and valued;
2. the implicit subsidies are made explicit; and,

The Honorable Reed Hundt
Page 2

3. the amount of subsidy currently supporting universal service is recovered by eligible telecommunications carriers either through the federal universal service support mechanism established pursuant to Section 254 of the Act, or through an alternative mechanism that ensures their recovery by eligible telecommunications carriers as part of any new access charge regime.

The Commission's goal of restructuring access charges to a more economically efficient model is critically important, but must not be done before identifying and removing the implicit subsidies contained in the current access charge regime, and creating a separate mechanism for their recovery. Restructuring access charges without providing a separate mechanism to ensure recovery of the universal service subsidy would perpetuate the incentive for bypass, and seriously threaten the availability of basic telephone service at affordable rates. After implicit subsidies are removed and recovered through an alternative mechanism, economic bypass would no longer threaten the universal service principles embodied in the Act.

In its interconnection rules adopted last year, the Commission ordered that competitive LECs who offer local service by combining unbundled network elements ("rebundlers") would be required to pay access charges to incumbent LECs until no later than June 1, 1997. The rationale for this rule was to avoid bypass of access charges by rebundlers as long as these charges contain a subsidy for the support of universal service. A key underlying assumption was that any subsidy supporting universal service would be removed from access charges prior to June 1.

If the Commission allows access charges to continue to contain any universal service subsidy after June 1, the rebundler will be able to bypass payment of the subsidy regardless of whether it is designated an eligible telecommunications carrier pursuant to Section 214(e) of the Act. The rebundler effectively will pocket the universal service subsidy without having to assume any of the obligations imposed by a State commission on eligible telecommunications carriers for the purposes of receiving universal service support. This outcome directly contravenes the plain language of the statute, and I urge the Commission to extend the moratorium on access charge evasion by rebundlers until a Further Notice on access reform is completed and the enumerated conditions set forth above are met.

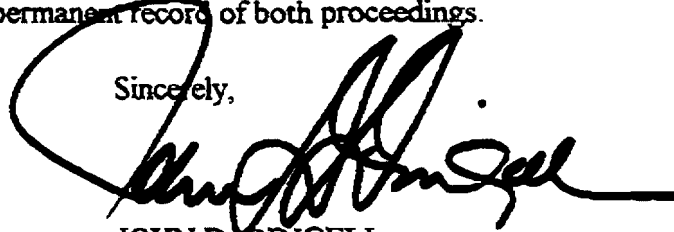
It has come to my attention that the Commission also is considering imposing a substantial increase in the Subscriber Line Charge (SLC) paid by certain consumers of local telephone service. I believe this action seriously would undermine the purpose and intent of Section 254 of the Act. Section 254 was enacted to ensure that basic telephone rates remain affordable for all Americans. The law provides that subsidies necessary to ensure continued affordability of basic telephone service should be funded by all telecommunications service providers on a non-discriminatory basis, and passed on to their customers as market conditions may allow. The law contains no provision that a portion of this cost should be borne by certain targeted consumers of basic telephone service.

The Honorable Reed Hundt
Page 3

Attached is a list of questions that are pertinent to the access reform and universal service proceedings. Please provide a response to this letter and the attached questions by Friday, May 9, 1997.

Due to the fact that neither of these two proceedings is restricted at this time, there is no question that this letter is exempt from Commission rules regarding *ex-parte* communications during the sunshine period. However, in the interest of fairness, please instruct the Office of General Counsel to serve all parties to this proceeding with a copy of this letter and its attachment, and include each in the permanent record of both proceedings.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "John D. Dingell". The signature is written over the word "Sincerely," and extends across the line for the name.

JOHN D. DINGELL
RANKING MEMBER

Attachment

cc: Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Commissioner Susan Ness
Commissioner James H. Quello

ATTACHMENT

1. Where in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 does the statute mandate the Commission complete its access reform proceeding concurrent with implementation of the universal service provisions contained in Section 254?
2. If the Commission is not required by law to reform access charges by May 8, 1997, why does it believe that access reform must be implemented concurrently with the universal service provisions of the Act?
3. Has the Commission identified the current level of implicit subsidy contained within access charges that supports the preservation of universal service? If so, what is the value of that implicit subsidy?
4. Will the Commission's access reform rules make explicit the portion of access charges that currently represents an implicit subsidy to support universal service? If so, will the explicit subsidy be funded and recovered through the federal universal service support mechanism prescribed by Section 254?
5. If the implicit universal service subsidy is made explicit, but will not be funded and recovered through the federal universal service support mechanism prescribed by Section 254, will its recovery be limited to eligible telecommunications carriers designated to receive universal service support pursuant to Section 214(e)? If not, please provide a detailed legal analysis supporting the Commission's conclusion that some portion of universal service subsidy may be recovered by entities not designated as eligible telecommunications carriers by a State commission.
6. If the implicit universal service subsidy is not made explicit, will eligible telecommunications carriers be guaranteed to receive access charges that implicitly contain a universal service subsidy? If not, please provide a detailed legal analysis supporting the Commission's conclusion that universal service subsidies currently contained in access charges may be precluded from recovery by entities designated as eligible telecommunications carriers by a State commission for the purposes of receiving universal service support.
7. Does the Commission intend to reduce access charges by an amount it deems to be "excess access," i.e., access charge revenue in excess of the combined sum of economic cost plus the existing universal service subsidy contained therein? If so, what is the value of the "excess access" component, and how was its value determined?
8. If the Commission intends to reduce access charges by an amount it deems to be "excess access," what mechanism does the Commission intend to use to eliminate these charges?

9. If the Commission plans to increase the productivity, or "X," factor contained in its price cap regime, would incumbent LECs retain flexibility to target resultant price decreases to service elements of their choosing? If incumbent LECs would not retain this flexibility, please provide an analysis of the predicted effect on the competitive balance in the local exchange and exchange access markets.
10. What is the total value of the subsidies that will be provided to schools, libraries, and health care facilities as a result of the "Snowe-Rockefeller" provisions of the 1996 Act?
11. Please provide a list of the advanced telecommunications services that would be subject to a discount for schools and libraries. What is the total value of the subsidies provided to schools and libraries for advanced telecommunications services?
12. If internal connections and internet access are included in the list of advanced telecommunications services provided in #11 above, what is the value of each of these items? Please provide a detailed legal analysis supporting the Commission's conclusion that these items are authorized for discounts pursuant to Section 254.
13. Please describe the administrative process by which the subsidies provided to schools, libraries, and health care facilities will be recovered by telecommunications service providers through the federal universal service support mechanism established pursuant to Section 254.
14. Please describe the revenue base upon which telecommunications service providers will contribute to the federal universal service support mechanism. Does the Commission intend to identify a different revenue base for contributions that directly support the Snowe-Rockefeller subsidies for schools, libraries, and health care facilities? If so, please provide a detailed legal analysis supporting the Commission's conclusion that a different revenue base is authorized as the basis for contributions to fund the Snowe-Rockefeller provisions contained in Section 254.

CC 96-48

April 29, 1997

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MAY 1 1997

Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 844
Washington, D.C. 20554

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioner Chong:

We are writing to express our shared concern regarding an important part of the implementation of the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Our concern deals with the application of access charges to customers of unbundled network elements. It is our belief that until the Commission completes the implementation of the new explicit universal service support mechanisms directed by the Act, that certain elements of access charges should apply to interstate traffic of carriers utilizing unbundled network elements.

In the First Report and Order in CC Docket 96-98 (Interconnection Order) the Commission stated:

Without a temporary mechanism such as the one we adopt below, the implementation of Section 251 would permit competitive local service providers that also provide interstate long-distance service to avoid totally the CCLC and TIC, which in part represent contributions toward universal service, by serving their local customers solely through the use of unbundled network elements rather than through resale...Because of our desire to err on the side of caution where universal service may be implicated, we conclude that some action is needed during the interim period before we complete our access reform and universal service proceedings." (Paragraph 719)

The "temporary mechanism" which the Commission references is the application of the CCL and 75% of the TIC until the completion of the universal service and access reform proceedings or June 30, 1997, whichever came first. When the Commission adopted this order, we believed that its decisions due by May 8, 1997 would fully address the establishment of new explicit support mechanisms to remove implicit support from interstate access charges.

As recent press reports have indicated, it does not appear that the Commission will complete its decision on new explicit support mechanisms for large LECs until sometime

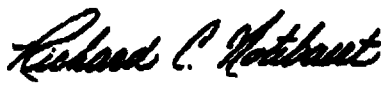


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April 29, 1997

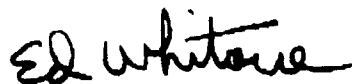
in 1998, and implementation of these mechanisms could well extend until January 1, 1999. Due to the important role which implicit support plays in assuring affordable basic service, we do not believe that it would be in the public interest to go for eighteen months before replacement mechanisms are in place. IXC's and others have indicated their intent to use unbundled network elements to aggressively market local service. This will place billions of dollars of needed support at risk with no replacement vehicle as contemplated by the Act.

We would hope that the Commission will continue to err on the side of caution where universal service is concerned, and will maintain this temporary mechanism until the universal service proceeding is completed and the new explicit support mechanisms are implemented.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

		
Richard C. Notebaert Chairman & CEO Ameritech	F. Duane Ackerman President & CEO BellSouth Corporation	Charles R. Lee Chairman & CEO GTE


Edward E. Whitacre, Jr.
Chairman & CEO
SBC Communications Inc.


Richard D. McCormick
Chairman & CEO
U S West



400 Pearman Dairy Road
Post Office Drawer 439
Anderson, South Carolina 29622
(803) 260-5000

An Equal Opportunity Employer

April 24, 1997

MAY 1 1997

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Chong:

I am the superintendent of Anderson School District Five, and I would like to thank you for your dedication in ensuring that all school districts and education consortia will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

The Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board decision will guarantee that all school districts will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools, and importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discounts is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

Anderson School District Five is currently in the process of developing networking access for up to seven computers into all classrooms in our school district, which will be completed during the summer of 1997. During the 1997-98 school year, we hope to get at least three computers into each of our elementary classrooms (approximately 260 classrooms). Since we also have a wide area network (WAN) that these computers will have access to, we will need to add more bandwidth so that our students will have access to the Internet and distance-learning opportunities as the computers into the classrooms are brought online.

Anderson School District Five would be able to take these funds and use them to add additional telecommunication services to our existing system by:

1. The leasing of more T1 facilities to give needed bandwidth and speed to the classroom in each of our 15 schools over our wide area network (WAN).
2. The purchase of the necessary routing equipment for those new services to connect those additional T1 facilities to our WAN.

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong

April 24, 1997

Page 2

3. With the additional bandwidth, we would be able to purchase distance-learning equipment that would allow our students to be involved with educational opportunities in other areas of the United States and around the world.
4. Higher recurring costs for these needed telecommunications facilities would directly affect (negatively) our ability to expand the system that we already have.

Additionally, monies saved through discounts could provide much needed resources to support other academic needs. School districts need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. Available resources for school districts are limited, compared to the need. I urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Karen C. Woodward, Ed. D.
Superintendent

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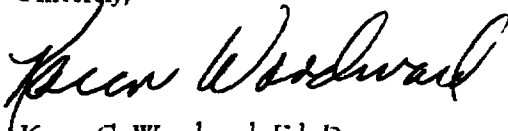
Post-It* Fax Note	7671	Date	4/24	# of pages	2
To	Hon. Rachelle Chong		From	Karen W. Johnson	
Co./Dept.	FCC		Co.	Anderson #5	
Phone #			Phone #	864-260-5042	
Fax #	202-418-2820		Fax #	864-260-5896	

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong
April 24, 1997
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Sincerely,



Karen C. Woodward, Ed. D.
Superintendent

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April 24, 1997

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Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

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The Honorable Susan Ness

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Sincerely,



Karen C. Woodward, Ed. D.
Superintendent

che



MENIFEE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

30205 Menifee Road, Menifee, California 92584
(909) 672-1851 • FAX (909) 672-1385

Menifee Pride
Working For You

Superintendent
Glen C. Newman, Ed.D.

April 22, 1997

The Honorable Susan Ness, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Ness:

I am writing to you in regards to the federal "E-Rate" Telecommunications Discount Program. I am a locally elected school board member from the Menifee Union School District, and I would like to express my strong support for this program and the proposed regulations governing its implementation.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have access to the Internet and the ability to provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of schools across the country, and more importantly, the plan will bring telecommunications services directly to the classrooms, where they can have the greatest impact on students. It is important to remember that each element of this plan is vital to the overall success of the discount program. Therefore, the inclusion of discounts for internal classroom connections should not be eliminated, nor should the size of the Universal Service Fund be reduced. As I am sure you are aware, this program is essential for preparing our students to enter the workforce of tomorrow.

The E-Rate Telecommunications Discount Program is desperately overdue and our students need these discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge you and the other FCC commissioners to fully support the recommendations of the Joint Board and approve the proposed final regulations regarding the discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Stack, Member
Governing Board of Education

LLS:na

cc: The Honorable Pete Wilson, Governor of the State of California



MENIFEE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

30205 Meniffee Road, Meniffee, California 92584
(909) 672-1851 • FAX (909) 672-1385

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April 22, 1997

Superintendent

Glen C. Newman, Ed.D.

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Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Chester W. Morrison, Clerk
Governing Board of Education

CWM:na

cc: The Honorable Pete Wilson, Governor of the State of California

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MENIFEE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

30205 Menifee Road, Menifee, California 92584
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Superintendent
Glen C. Newman, Ed.D.

April 22, 1997

The Honorable Susan Ness, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Ness:

I am writing to you in regards to the federal "E-Rate" Telecommunications Discount Program. I am a locally elected school board member from the Menifee Union School District, and I would like to express my strong support for this program and the proposed regulations governing its implementation.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have access to the Internet and the ability to provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of schools across the country, and more importantly, the plan will bring telecommunications services directly to the classrooms, where they can have the greatest impact on students. It is important to remember that each element of this plan is vital to the overall success of the discount program. Therefore, the inclusion of discounts for internal classroom connections should not be eliminated, nor should the size of the Universal Service Fund be reduced. As I am sure you are aware, this program is essential for preparing our students to enter the workforce of tomorrow.

The E-Rate Telecommunications Discount Program is desperately overdue and our students need these discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge you and the other FCC commissioners to fully support the recommendations of the Joint Board and approve the proposed final regulations regarding the discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

John C. Fitzgerald, Member
Governing Board of Education

JCF:na

cc: The Honorable Pete Wilson, Governor of the State of California



MENIFEE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

30205 Meniffee Road, Meniffee, California 92584
(909) 672-1851 • FAX (909) 672-1385

Meniffee Pride
Working For You

Superintendent
Glen C. Newman, Ed.D.

April 22, 1997

The Honorable Susan Ness, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

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Sincerely,

Victor Giardinelli, President
Governing Board of Education

VG:na

cc: The Honorable Pete Wilson, Governor of the State of California

LEE E. RIECK

Superintendent
(412) 325-7600

ROSEANN B. NYIRI

Director of Pupil and Personnel Services
(412) 325-7601 or (412) 325-7603

JACK SAMUELS

Director of Instructional Services
(412) 325-7606

JANE TACHOIR

Director of Secondary Program Services
(412) 325-7605

WILLIAM J. KRUCK

Director of Business Services
(412) 325-7608



Franklin Regional School District

3210 School Road
Murrysville, Pennsylvania 15668

April 24, 1997

JUDITH C. BRAGGINS

Administrative Assistant for
Special Education Services
(412) 325-7601

PATRICIA A. ANZUR

Supervisor of Child Accounting/
Transportation Services
(412) 325-7607

WILLIAM J. GALLAGHER

Supervisor of Accounting/
Purchasing Services
(412) 325-7608

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

The Honorable Susan Ness
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M. Street, N.W., Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Susan Ness:

I am a Director of Instructional Services at the Franklin Regional School District. I am writing to thank you for your support with the Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan.,

This plan will ensure that all schools and libraries will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all schools. These plans will ensure that even the poorest schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet. Also, they are able to bring services directly to the classroom where students learn, and provide distance-learning opportunities.

Your inclusions of internal classroom connections for discounts is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the workforce of tomorrow. We will continue to use the money to implement our technology plan to supplement our local funds for staff development. Our students are in need of substantial discounts this year.

I fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries, and I urge the FCC to do so.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jack Samuels

Director of Instructional Services

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OFFICE OF
COMMISSIONER
APR 24 11 28 AM '97

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Superintendent
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April 24, 1997

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Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M. Street, N.W., Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

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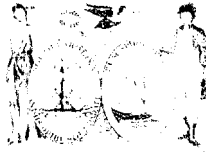
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Muto
Supervisor of Technology Services

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
State Budget and Control Board
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

APR 29 10 51 AM '97



DAVID M. BEASLEY, CHAIRMAN
GOVERNOR

RICHARD A. ECKSTROM
STATE TREASURER

EARLE E. MORRIS, JR.
COMPTROLLER GENERAL

P.O. BOX 12444
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29211
(803) 734-2320

JOHN DRUMMOND
CHAIRMAN, SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

HENRY E. BROWN, JR.
CHAIRMAN, WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

LUTHER F. CARTER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 28, 1997

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

The Honorable James H. Quello
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
Room 802
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Re: Federal-State Joint Board Recommendations
on Universal Service (CC Docket No. 96-45)

Dear Commissioner Quello:

On behalf of the State of South Carolina, I would like to urge the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") to implement promptly the general recommendations of the Federal-State Joint Board relating to universal service support for K-12 schools and for libraries. There are a few minor details of the Joint Board's recommendations for school/library support that should be modified to make the program administratively more manageable. Specifically, the rules should expressly recognize that state agencies may file consolidated requests for universal service support on behalf of their schools and libraries, and the Universal Fund Administrator should be instructed to accept such consolidated filings. (South Carolina and other states have been in contact with the FCC's staff on these and other matters.) Overall, however, the Joint Board's recommendations are critical to the success of the combined efforts of federal, state and local governments to ensure that all of our children have access to the basic telecommunications resources necessary for enhanced learning and interaction with the burgeoning worldwide electronic information storehouse.

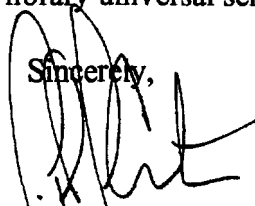
We in South Carolina have recognized for some time the tremendous importance of having our schools and libraries connected to the Internet. In 1996, at my behest, our legislature appropriated \$10 million to connect our K-12 schools and our libraries to the Internet. As of April 1, 1997, we had completed dedicated connections of approximately 620 schools and libraries. We expect to connect the remaining 697 schools and libraries by December, 1997.

But much more needs to be done in South Carolina and elsewhere. We need to train our teachers to bring the full potential of the Internet and other technologies into their classrooms. We need to acquire additional computers and related technology to ensure that our schools and libraries are adequately equipped to meet the needs of their respective student and user populations. We need to enhance the use of live video instruction capabilities (including interactive video conferencing) that have been pioneered by the South Carolina Educational Television System. And we need to ensure that every one of our students (especially those in the most disadvantaged school districts) has the maximum opportunity to use the educational tools made possible through computers and communications technology.

The school/library universal service proposals will go a long way toward helping us achieve our objectives. Although South Carolina already has committed to connect our schools and libraries to the Internet, the availability of universal service support will enable us to free up funds for the important related tasks listed above and many others that are essential to providing our children with a quality education.

We in South Carolina very much appreciate the support that you, the FCC, the Joint Board, Congress and the Administration have given to this endeavor. We urge the FCC to take the next step by promptly adopting rules that will implement the Joint Board's basic recommendations on school/library universal service support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. F. Carter', written over the typed name.

Luther F. Carter
Executive Director

cc: Barbara Nielsen
State Superintendent of Education

CC: 96-45

BERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
J.C. PARKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
10155 BERRY ROAD
WALDORF, MD 20603

TO: Reed Hundt

ORGANIZATION: Federal Communications Commission

FAX NO. 202-418-2801

FROM: Cheryl Eirin

ORGANIZATION: BERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PHONE NO. 301-638-2330

FAX NO. 301-375-9106

COVER PAGE PLUS 1 PAGES

REMARKS _____

April 22, 1997

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

WE are faculty and staff from *BERRY ELEMENTARY* in Maryland. We are writing in support of the Universal Service discounts for schools and libraries that have been recommended by the Joint Board.

We would like to thank you for your dedication in ensuring that all schools and libraries will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

The Telecommunications Act and the Joint Board discount plan will guaranteed that even the poorest schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools, and, importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discount is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. We urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal services for schools and libraries.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Green
Mary S. Fenton
Sharon E. Cox
Denise K. Schoell
Linda Hodgson
Kristin E. Keenan
Mally F. Rithief

Lisa R. Wiley
Kathleen M. Rys
C. Cisto
Kathryn Stapleton
Linda Dumbley
Lisa M. Brown
Betsy Simon